

SAY AHH!

Note to teachers: This supplement includes a discussion guide, lessons and Michigan Content Standards to use with the Michigan Time Traveler page published in the *Lansing State Journal* on April 11, 2001. You may reproduce the pages in this supplement to use with students.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

- **The Ague:** How would a disease that causes chills and fever affect an early Michigan settler who was trying to clear land, build a home, fill in swamps and start a farm? Some rural ague sufferers moved into towns to live. Why do you think they moved? Why are we encouraged today to get rid of standing water so mosquitoes cannot breed? (the mosquito-borne Eastern equine encephalitis virus) (*SOC 1.3. Analyze and Interpret the Past*)
- **The Flu:** What does the jump-rope poem say and what does it mean? It uses a play on words, or pun. What is “Enza?” (a girl’s name). How would “flu” be spelled according to its real meaning? (flew) Have students make up their own short poems about familiar diseases or other common themes. (*ELA 8. Genre and Craft of Language*)
- **Polio:** What did people do to prevent the spread of polio? What were two major crippling effects of the disease? What finally stopped the spread of the disease? (*SOC 1.3. Analyze and Interpret the Past*)
- **Dates in Michigan’s Health History:** Ask students to name the “shots” (vaccinations) they have had. Name some diseases scientists are trying to cure or prevent today. (AIDS, cancer, meningitis, encephalitis, Legionnaires’ disease) (*SOC.1.1. Time and Chronology*)

ACTIVITY ONE: Create a Health Poster

(*SOC IV.1. Economic Perspective: Individual and Household Choices; Arts 2. Visual Arts: Creating; Arts 3. Visual Arts: Analyzing in Context*)

In 1924 and 1925 the Michigan Department of Health created posters to encourage children to practice good health habits. Some of these posters (and photographs of those that no longer exist) are in the State Archives of Michigan. Two posters are reproduced in color on the Michigan Time Traveler page. Eight more are on the reproducible master on page three. Larger versions of the posters are on the Michigan Historical Center Web site at:

<http://www.sos.state.mi.us/history/archive/photos/healthposters.html>.

Using the posters, conduct a “then and now” discussion of the messages on the posters. Which are still good ideas today? Are there any slogans that you would rewrite today? (For example, “I brush my teeth every day.” to “I brush my teeth after every meal.”) Discuss the artist’s drawings. What things make them look like they were done in the 1920s? What changes would make them look modern? Help students brainstorm images and messages for posters promoting good health habits today. List the ideas on the board. Have each student create a health poster to encourage younger children to practice one or more good health habits.

ACTIVITY TWO: Make a Medical History Time Line

(*SOC.1.1. Time and Chronology*)

Put each of the events on the Michigan Time Traveler page’s “Dates in Michigan’s Health History” time line on a card or poster. Display them in chronological order around the classroom, leaving space between each. Use an encyclopedia, the Web or textbooks to find other events important in the prevention and cure of disease. Have groups of 3 to 5 students pick the three events that they think are most important and explain their decision. Add these events to your time line.

ACTIVITY THREE: Descriptive Poetry

(ELA.1. Meaning and Communication: Reading; ELA.3. Meaning and Communication in Context; ELA.8. Genre and Craft of Language; SOC.1.3. Analyze and Interpret the Past)

Provide each student with a copy of “The Ague” (page 4). Choral read the poem (or have different students read selected lines in turn). Point out and discuss the descriptive phrases in the poem. What is the primary sense to which the writer refers? (**touch**: creeping feeling on skin, shaking, feeling cold) Ask students to think about when they have been sick. What other senses were affected? List the senses on the board: touch, sight, hearing, smell, taste. Ask students to suggest words (action verbs, descriptive adjectives) for each sense that describes how they felt. (eyes: burning, red, dry, dripping and so on) List words on the board under each sense.

The author of this poem personified the ague. (The illness is the subject doing the action: “It shook me,” “took me,” “It rested.”) Ask students: Can you think of an illness you’ve had as doing things to you? What did it do? Assignment: write a poem of 10 or more lines (adapt length to class; poem can rhyme or not) about a time when a sickness affected you and how it made you feel. (Disabled students might write about an illness such as cold or flu or about how their disability affects them.) Personify the illness, address at least three senses and use descriptive language (may select from those listed during class discussion).

Assessment Rubric for “Descriptive Poetry”

4	3	2	1
Illness is personified. Poem uses active, colorful and specific verbs and descriptive adjectives to show action done to victim by the illness. Poem addresses 3 or more senses. Poem meets or exceeds length requirement. There are no spelling or grammar errors.	Illness is personified. Poem uses active verbs and descriptive adjectives selected from class list and at least one original descriptive phrase. Poem addresses 2 or more senses. Poem meets length requirement. There may be several minor spelling or grammar errors, but they do not interfere with readability.	At least one example of the illness is personified. Poem uses one or two active verbs and descriptive adjectives selected from class list, none original. Poem addresses at least two senses. Poem may not meet length requirement. There may be several minor spelling or grammar errors, but they do not interfere with readability.	Topic of poem is unclear. Illness is not personified. Poem uses few examples of active verbs or descriptive adjectives from class list and no original examples. Poem addresses only one or no sense. Poem does not meet length requirement. Spelling and grammar errors interfere with readability.

ACTIVITY FOUR: Health and the Economy

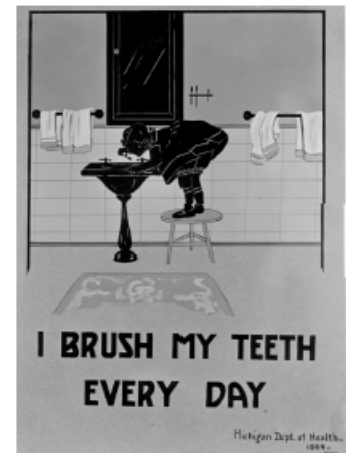
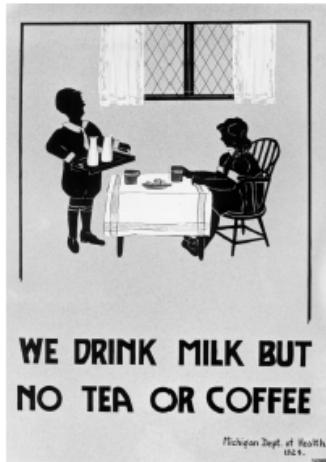
(SOC IV.2. Economic Perspective: Business Choices)

During the Spanish Influenza of 1918, some life insurance companies found it difficult to pay their policy holders because so many deaths occurred around the same time. During the 1950s, communities closed swimming pools and playgrounds to stop the spread of polio. Today flu sometimes closes schools. Legionnaires’ disease (legionellosis) has shut down large buildings such as hotels and offices. Illness affects businesses in and out of the health industry. People invest their money in pharmaceutical companies that develop new medicines and vaccines. Hospitals plan the numbers of beds and hire their staff based on projected needs. Restaurants, theaters and sports venues see their revenues fall when many people stay home for fear of catching the disease that’s “going around.”

Ask students to suggest names of health-related and other types of businesses in your town. (Help them remember life and health insurance companies/agents, pharmacies, trash haulers, funeral homes, cemeteries and monument makers.) List a cross-section of the suggested businesses on the board. Discuss the positive and negative (and profit and loss) impacts each might feel if large numbers of persons in your town were (1) to fear catching an illness (e.g., flu), (2) to become ill or (3) to die from the illness. Include loss of sales, unanticipated increases in sales and difficulties in maintaining levels of production or service due to workers’ illness. Ask students to imagine that they each own one of the businesses listed and write a one-page strategy showing how they might face the effects of a flu epidemic.

Michigan Department of Health Posters, 1924

(State Archives of Michigan)



See these posters on the Michigan Historical Center Web site: www.michigan.gov/hal/0,1607,7-160-15481_19271_19357-56882--,00.html.

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The Ague

All along my back the creeping,
Soon gave place to rushing, leaping,
As if countless frozen demons
Had concluded to explore
All the cavities—the varmints—
‘Twixt me and my nether garments,
Through my boots into the muskeg;
Then I found myself a shaking—
Gently shaking more and more—
Every moment more and more.

‘Twas the ague, and it shook me
Into heavy clothes, and took me
Shaking to the camp-fire—every,
Every place where there was warmth in store,
Shaking till my molars rattled,
Shaking, and with all my warming,
Feeling colder than before,
Shaking till it had exhausted
All its power to shake me more—
Till it could not shake me more.

Then it rested till the morrow,
When it came with all the horror
That it had the face to borrow,
Shaking, shaking as before,
And from that day in September—
Day which I shall long remember—
It has made diurnal visits,
Shaking off my boots, and driving me
To bed if nothing more,—
Fully this, and nothing more.

Words to know:

Ague (ā'-gyōō): a form of malaria spread by mosquitoes,
causing fever, chills and shaking

Cavities: empty spaces

Diurnal: happening every day

Muskeg: bog or swampy area

Nether garments: underwear

Source: Higgs, John J. "Saw Michigan Before The Lumbering Days." *Michigan History*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (1945), 335-342.
(Note: Line 5, section 2, has been edited. *Michigan History* text has "morals rattled.")

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